C.I.A. HEAD NAMES ESPIONAGE CHIEF

Colby Becomes Director of Clandestine Operations

3/1/73

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28—James R. Schlesinger, the new director of Central Intelligence, has named William E. Colby, former head of the American pacification program in South Vietnam and a long-time intelligence operative, as director of clandestine operations.

Knowledgeable sources reported today that Mr. Colby, 53 years old, assumed his new top-level job this week. Formally known inside the agency as the deputy director of plans, Mr. Colby will be in charge of all C.I.A. espionage activities and covert operations, widely known in Washington as the "department of dirty tricks."

Mr. Colby's previous position, executive director of the agency, a post combining the functions of the inspector general and controller, has ben abolished by Mr. Schlesinger, the sources said, as part of his revamping of the agency.

Two Generals Chosen

It was also disclosed that Mr. Schlesinger has chosen two highly regarded major generals for his new Intelligence Resource Advisory Committee.

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The generals selected for the committee are Maj. Gen. Daniel O. Graham of the Army, who is director of estimates for the Defense Intelligence Agency, and Maj. Gen. Lew Allen of the Air Force, deputy commander for satellite programs.

General Graham, whose promotion to major general becomes official tomorrow, has been a sharp critic of the C.I.A.'s Office of National Estimates, one of the top intelligence review groups in the nation.

Many Are Alarmed

His appointment has alarmed many intelligence officials, who view it as the beginning of an attack on what some have called a liberal bias in the agency's intelligence estimates. In a recent syndicated column, for example, Joseph Alsop criticized what he called the "special historical bias" of the analysts under the leadership of the former Director of Central Intelligence, Richard M. Helms, who was named Ambassador to Iran last January.

Mr. Alsop's column then went on to note that Mr. Schlesinger "is even bringing in from the Defense Department the most pungent and persistent critic of the C.I.A.'s estimating-analyzing hierarchy."

"This detested figure is, in fact, to be named the new head of the hierarchy, unless present plans are changed," the column said.

Intelligence sources said that the unidentified critic of the agency mentioned in Mr. Alsop's column was General Graham, who became well known to officials in the agency after serving a tour with it as a colonel.

Another Appointment

It could not be learned whether General Graham will be named head of Mr. Schlesinger's Intelligence Resource Advisory Committee, although official sources inside the C.I.A. did confirm that he and General Allen would be joining the director's staff. Agency assignments have never been publicly announced by the Government.

Another member of the staff, it was disclosed, will be Dr. Jack Martin, who until early this year was serving with the White House's Office of Science and Technology.

The sources said that the intelligence committee had replaced the C.I.A.'s National Intelligence Program Evaluation staff, which was headed by Bronson Tweedy and Thomas Parrott, two key aides to Mr. Helms who, The New York Times reported last week, were ordered to retire by Mr. Schlesinger.

The Times also reported that Thomas H. Karamessines, Mr. Colby's predecessor as director of the clandestine services, had been ordered to retire by Mr. Schlesinger. Agency officials disputed that account today and said that Mr. Karamessines had in fact requested retirement last year but had been asked to stay on.

Mr. Karamessines has been in ill health for some time.

The appointment of Mr. Colby, a Princeton graduate who began his intelligence career with the Office of Strategic Services in World War II, was more favorably received by many senior intelligence officials.

"He's the classic old espionage type," one intelligence analyst said of Mr. Colby. "The kind of guy who never attracts attention."

Other sources questioned whether Mr. Schlesinger's appointment of Mr. Colby would lead to a widely expected shake-up of the clandestine services, which attained notoriety in 1967 with the disclosure that it was secretly subsidizing the National Student Association.